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BRIEFS

CORRECTIONS

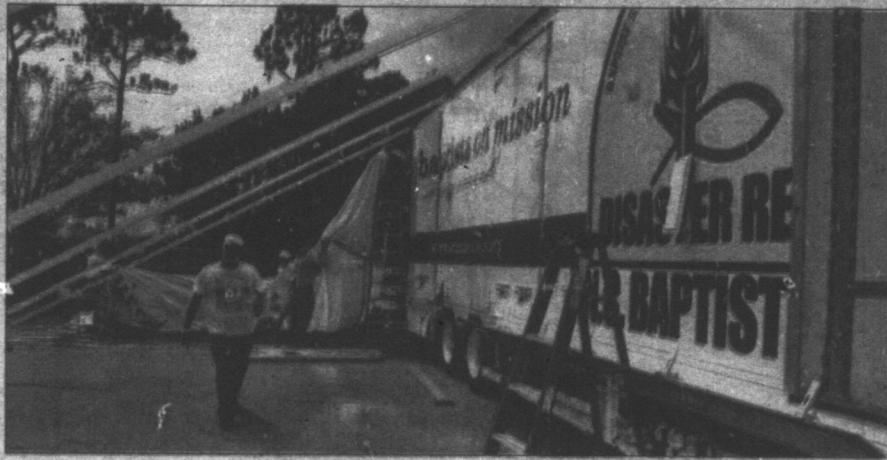
On page six of the Sept. 13 issue of The Baptist Record, the vote of state Rep. Chris Johnson (Hattiesburg, District 87) on the question of a statewide lottery was incorrectly recorded. It was a reporter's error. Johnson actually voted twice against the statewide lottery and did not change ("flip") his vote in either instance, during the special session called by Gov. Phil Bryant to fund transportation needs partially with a state lottery. The Baptist Record regrets the error. Johnson's vote was listed correctly on the roster on page two of that issue, where all legislators' state lottery votes appeared. In another case, the state lottery vote of state Senator Russell Jolly (Houston, District 8) on the page two roster was incorrect. It was a transcription error. Jolly actually voted against the state lottery during the special session. The Baptist Record regrets the error.

TOP ABORTION PROVIDER NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON (BP) — Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) announced Sept. 12 the selection of physician Leana Wen, health commissioner of the city of Baltimore, as the new president of the nation's No. 1 abortion provider. She takes the helm three years after undercover videos were first released that provided evidence the organization trades in body parts from aborted babies. Planned Parenthood has continued to receive more than \$500 million a year in taxpayer funds despite the investigations that ensued. PPFA-affiliated clinics perform more than 300,000 U.S. abortions annually.

HAMMOND CHOSEN AS GBC'S EXEC. DIRECTOR

DULUTH, Ga. (BP) — Thomas Hammond, 56, lead pastor of First Church, Alpharetta, Ga., was tapped Sept. 11 to become the next executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC). He will replace J. Robert White who is retiring after 26 years. A graduate of Mid-America Seminary and former two-term GBC president, Hammond has led First Church, Alpharetta, into the top 10% of fastest-growing churches in the state convention.



READY TO FEED — Members of the North Carolina Baptist Convention's disaster relief ministry begin setting up that state convention's feeding unit after Hurricane Florence passed through the area. The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's fully self-contained, 18-wheeler feeding unit is currently in North Carolina to provide an additional 20,000 meals per day for victims of the far-reaching storm. (Photo courtesy of North Carolina Baptist Convention)

MS Baptists tackle Florence damage

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Mississippi Baptist disaster relief teams headed to North Carolina earlier this week as Hurricane Florence left behind massive flooding and destruction not unlike Hurricane Katrina's devastating path through Mississippi in 2005.

Trained and credentialed volunteers departed Sept. 21 with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Task Force's fully self-contained, 18-wheeler

feeding unit capable of providing 20,000 meals per day for the victims of Hurricane Florence," said Shane McGivney, director of men's ministry at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and coordinator of the Task Force.

"We don't have an exact location for the feeding unit yet, but we're confident it's going to be in eastern North Carolina where flooding has been severe," he said.

A second trained and credentialed feeding team is being

assembled to relieve the first shift on Sept. 28. "We'll probably be feeding there for a least a month," McGivney estimated.

"Mudout" teams that strip homes of damage so repairs can begin are also going to be in great demand, he said. "A team of 12 volunteers has already been assembled from Lee and Itawamba Associations for duty in North Carolina on Sept. 24-30, and there will be a great need for many more mudout teams."

see FLORENCE on p. 9



SPIKES

Local nurse to take reins of medical organization

TALLADEGA, AL. (BP and local reports) — Mississippi Baptist Lori Spikes will serve as the new executive director of the Baptist Nursing Fellowship (BNF) after being elected to the post during the group's annual meeting in early September at Alabama Baptists' Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega.

A longtime Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) missionary to Chile, Spikes is a registered nurse with 40 years of experience in various settings. She currently serves as a volunteer triage nurse at Mission First, a primary care clinic in Jackson for low-income uninsured individuals and families involving more than a hundred churches, ministries, and businesses in the local area.

Spikes, who most recently chaired BNF's resource development committee, was also an IMB Journeyman nurse in Honduras from 1980-1982. She and her husband Jim, a discipleship/congregation

see NURSE on p. 11

Tatum Court tower caps symbolic moment



» MORE INSIDE

More than a year and a half after an EF3 tornado swept through the campus of William Carey University, construction is finalized on the new Tatum Court marking the full recovery of the 126-year-old institution of higher learning. see p. 9



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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Just watch...

Now that Mississippi's legislators and our Gambling Governor Phil Bryant have approved a lottery to allow state government to swindle even more assets from those who can least afford it, the politicians involved in that scam are ready for us to move on and stop printing their names in The Baptist Record.

All right, then. Let's move on — to the next vices our politicians will likely be seeking to legalize rather than taking the risk of discussing the hard realities of funding Mississippi government with its citizens.

Let's see... Alcohol has already been legalized and is consuming individual and families at a breath-taking rate, so they can't look to that for their next dodge.

Almost every form of gambling known to man has already been legalized and is draining the desperately-needed circulation of cash to out of state mega-corporations, so new scams are hard to come by in that category.

Tobacco? It would be difficult to lay more of a financial burden on smokers/chewers and get by with it. Even nicotine addicts have their limits, and that golden goose is just about dead from politicians' exploitation.

Where to turn? Next on the list of vices to be legalized is probably recreational use of marijuana. It's been a boon to the states that have already done so, right? Not exactly. Consider just this one revealing slice of legalized recreational marijuana use.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) in Arlington, Va., is a nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing the losses from crashes on the nation's roads, according to its web site. In its area of expertise, the Institute has sounded the alarm on recreational marijuana use.

"Legalizing recreational marijuana use in Colorado, Oregon, and Washington has resulted in collision claim frequencies that are about three percent higher overall than would have been expected without legalization," IIHS reports, utilizing data from its sister organization, the Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI).

In an explanatory chart contained in their report titled, Estimated Effects of Recreational Marijuana

Sales in 3 states: Change in Claim Frequency for Vehicles up to 33 Years Old 2012-16, HLDI lists a whopping increase of nearly 14% in Colorado, 6.2% in Washington, and 4.5% in Oregon.

The combined-state analysis shows that the first three states to legalize recreational marijuana have experienced more crashes," says Matt Moore, senior vice president of HLDI, on the institute's web site.

David Zuby, IIHS executive vice president and chief research officer, also says about the study, "Worry that legalized marijuana is increasing crash rates isn't misplaced. HLDI's findings on the early experience of Colorado, Oregon, and Washington should give other states eyeing legalization pause."

Not in Mississippi, where our politicians rush headlong into dangerous areas with health consequences (alcohol) and addiction (gambling) if there's a financial payoff. That's the only requirement. They've done it before. They'll do it again if we aren't vigilant.

Which brings us to the second item on the list: Prostitution. Don't scoff; who would have thought Mississippi's leaders — people we trust with the welfare of our state — would have taken us as far down this sordid road as they already have?

Supporters of legalized prostitution (not necessarily in this state) have already begun the process of softening attitudes toward the illicit sex trade. Remember when "gambling" was magically transformed into "gaming"? The same process is happening again. Prostitution proponents have convinced national news media outlets and many organizations to refer to prostitutes as "sex workers." Like the conversion of gambling into gaming, doesn't sex worker make prostitution sound less harsh and more acceptable?

Many Mississippi Baptists believe there are enough of us to make a difference in the future of our state and its governance. They're right. To make that difference, though, we're going to have to throw off the indifferent attitude we have about our state leadership and get involved.

Let them know what you think. Maybe that way Mississippi Baptists won't be belittled on the floor of the Miss. House of Representatives, as we were during the lottery debate.

Do you truly care?

Everyone who knew him just called him "Red." He was my best friend and we spent a lot of time together.

We romped in the fields and woods, swam together in the creek, and talked a lot. Well, I talked. Red mostly just cocked his head to one side and listened attentively.

In the fall we would run through the woods together in search of coons, possums, skunks, squirrels, rabbits, whatever.

One day I got to thinking about what the preacher had said about heaven and hell, and I became concerned about Red's eternal destiny. So I sat him down and preached to him, explaining the severity of his condition as best I could.

He failed to show as much concern as I felt he should, but he listened patiently with his eyes glued to mine. Then he wagged his tail and licked my face.

That would have set me to giggling, usually, but this was too serious to my eight-year-old mind. I told Red I would have to baptize him. Being a Baptist, I didn't even consider sprinkling. On the other hand, I didn't want to risk drowning my best friend, so I just stood him on his hind legs, held his front paws to his nose, and dipped him in a pretend baptismal.

Even without the water I felt better about Red, and he never complained.

A few days later, Red turned up missing. Daddy said he thought he had seen him lying in a ditch by the road not far from home, hit by a car, but he couldn't be sure it was Red. For weeks I held out hope, but I never saw him again.

Now years later, with my theology strengthened by Bible study and a seminary degree, I confess that there was a flaw in my doctrinal position in those days. Fact is, I could not even define "theology" or "doctrine" as an eight-year-old.

One thing is certain, though, as a young boy I was more concerned about Red than many church members seem to be about their friends and neighbors and family members.

Of course I looked foolish "baptizing" a dog in the dog pen, but I didn't care how it may have looked to whoever may



Guest opinion
with Steve Playl

Many of us are embarrassed to invite our friends to church or show someone we truly care about them. Sometimes we are afraid to discuss religion even with our own family members. Maybe some of us think we are too sophisticated to talk about Jesus ... We must be willing to share our faith from a heart of love, because people need the Lord.

have witnessed the process. I loved that old coonhound.

Many of us are embarrassed to invite our friends to church or show someone we truly care about them. Sometimes we are afraid to discuss religion even with our own family members. Maybe some of us think we are too sophisticated to talk about Jesus.

As an eight-year-old, my theology needed a bit more depth but at least my heart was in the right place. We must be willing to share our faith from a heart of love, because people need the Lord. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness," the Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1:18, "but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

Playl is a retired Baptist pastor, chaplain at a hospital in Bristol, Tenn., newspaper columnist, and college instructor. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

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TV family comedies aren't for families, PTC research warns

LOS ANGELES (BP and local reports) — Many prime-time television series promoted as family comedies are anything but that, increasingly using sexually graphic language in scenes that include child actors, the Parents Television Council (PTC) said in its latest research.

More than four-fifths, 81.5%, of all shows studied had scenes of adult actors using explicit sexual dialogue in front of juvenile cast members, PTC pointed out in *Lewd by Example*, its study of 332 episodes of family-themed situation comedies on television networks ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox and the CW.

"When it comes to airing sexually charged dialogue in front of children, the broadcast television networks eagerly appear to be saying 'me too' when they could be saying '#metoo,'" PTC President Tim Winter said Sept. 10 in releasing the study.

The study's findings come "when our nation is grappling with a crisis of inappropriate sexual provocation. Furthermore, the networks are marketing this alarming content trend as being appropriate for children to watch," he said.

PTC reported 89 instances of adult actors using sexual dialogue or engaging in discussions of sexual matters in front of child cast members, which works out to about once in every two hours of programming.

The U.S. Congress should ensure that the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board, the agency overseeing the TV content ratings system, makes sure ratings are accurate, consistent, transparent, and publicly accountable, the PTC said.

"We are working with congressional offices to require the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) to review and report on the TV content ratings system and oversight of that system by

the TV Parental Guidelines Monitoring Board," Winter said.

"It is time that this 20-year-old ratings system is thoroughly reviewed and updated to protect children from harmful media content."

Winter also called on networks to air programming that is safe and suitable for children during time slots children are likely to utilize.

Research correlates the actions of teens to the content of television shows they watch, PTC said, with television ratings as a type of "super-peer" influencer for early-maturing teens.

"TV discussions of sex have been scientifically proven to influence teens in their own sexual behavior," PTC observed in its study. "When Hollywood is increasingly conscious of the harm done by crude, sexually harassing language used in front of women, and is taking steps to reduce or eliminate it, it is tragic that the entertainment industry remains oblivious to the effect of sexualizing talk in front of children — both child actors, and child viewers at home."

The most egregious offender in the study was *A.P. Bio*, which NBC markets as a "comedy about how not to teach high school biology."

The series debuted in February and surpassed Fox's *The Mick*, its closest offender in relation to language and scenarios.

This demonstrates a clear trend: the increasing reliance of shows like *A.P. Bio* and *The Mick* on sexual dialogue and situations in front of children will only increase the number of programs which include such scenarios," PTC warned in its study.

"The likelihood of this is underlined by the fact that *A.P. Bio* has already been renewed for a second season, thus setting a clear precedent for fall 2018 shows."

The study is available at parentstv.org/study2018.



A WAY OUT — The Light of Hope Learning Center in Bangladesh helps prevent girls from being trapped by sex trafficking operations and other forms of exploitation. Crafts created at the center are available for sale through the WorldCrafts ministry of the Women's Missionary Union. (WMU photo)

WorldCrafts ministry expands aid for children, family causes

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP and local reports) — WorldCrafts, the fair trade division of the national Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, has launched a new initiative to benefit the work of Lifeline Children's Services and families adopting domestically or internationally through Lifeline.

Lifeline is in partnership with WMU and is housed in the Southern Baptist auxiliary's headquarters in Birmingham.

Lifeline supports families in their adoption journey, as "a way God gives families to vulnerable children who need to know the love of a family and the love of Christ," according to the organization.

For families adopting through Lifeline, registration can be done online by completing a form to be entered into WorldCrafts' system. Upon receipt of the registration, WorldCrafts creates a webpage and promotional kit for the family.

After a family is registered as a beneficiary, their family, friends, coworkers, and churches can go to the family's webpage and sign up to host benefits for their adoption.

Emily Swader, marketing strategist for WorldCrafts, said the WMU ministry "joins Lifeline in its dedication to the rescue and transformation of vulnerable children and families throughout the world."

"Many people have a desire to assist foster children but don't know how or where to get started. This initiative through WorldCrafts can help create connections between churches and families and their local

Baptist children and family ministry."

Sandy Wisdom-Martin
executive director
of WMU

sans and their families around the world.

Any individual or church can host an online WorldCrafts benefit for Lifeline, for families adopting through Lifeline, or for one of the participating Baptist children's home ministries.

Each benefit lasts one month and at the end of the month, 20% of all sales generated by the benefit will go directly to the host's selected beneficiary.

To begin the process of hosting a benefit, a prospective host or church simply completes an online registration form. Upon receipt of the form, WorldCrafts will create a unique promotion kit for the host that includes a webpage, promotion code, media slides and sliders, social media images, and a bulletin insert.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of WMU, highlighted WorldCrafts' initiative for Baptist children's home ministries by noting, "Many people have a desire to assist foster children but don't know how or where to get started. This initiative through WorldCrafts can help create connections between churches and families and their local Baptist children and family ministry."

For more information about the WorldCrafts benefit initiative through the Baptist Coalition for Children and Families, visit WorldCrafts.org/BCCF.



WORST OF WORST — *A.P. Bio* on NBC was deemed the most egregious offender when the Parents TV Council studied a trend in prime-time comedies of adults using sexually explicit language in front of child characters on the shows. (Promotional poster)

Date: 9/11/2018
Subject: Vivid and Overwhelming Memories, Thoughts of Now and Then

I was up and about and ready to leave for a meeting with the North American Mission Board in Georgia. Shirley and my toddler grandson were going with me to stay a couple of days with family in Birmingham. We were minutes away from leaving home. I stood in the living room with the TV on a morning news show and was watching as they were interrupted with the news about a plane that had flown into one of the Twin Towers in New York City. I watched with interest and listened as they fumbled for information and explanations of what had happened.

Then another plane was spotted flying toward the Towers. Soon they recognized that it was a huge jet and the world watched as unscripted and unfiltered we saw the jet that was loaded with busy people flying to another place of work or social engagement crash into a fiery ball and now both towers looked like giant smokestacks on the New York landscape.

I began unloading the car; for whatever else the day held, it was not going to be a trip to Atlanta. As I brought things in and began to have phone calls, I watched as the news feed changed from place to place including shifting to Florida where President George Bush was sitting in a classroom reading a story to a group of children. The president was interrupted and told that America was under attack. He gently disengaged from the children and made his way out to try to begin making sense of what was taking place in our world.

I soon left home and headed to downtown Jackson to the Baptist Building to talk with the staff. On the way, more information was coming in on the radio. We began to understand that genuinely, America was under attack. Another plane had hit the Pentagon, and then we heard of another plane that had gone down and crashed in Pennsylvania near Shanksville. What next? What were we to do? Where were we to go? How could we help? How many more planes would crash?

I got to the Baptist Building and called



Directions
With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Memories of 9/11

all of our people to the Chapel. I told them what we knew, and I told them that we would be leaving soon, closing the Baptist Building, and for them to make their way home to be with their families and their children and to take care of them, love them, and help other folks as the rest of the day unfolded. Within hours, it was incredible all that had unfolded before us as the entire population of the United States of America, over 300,000,000 people, had their plans for that day scrubbed, changed, and their world forever altered.

On that day, all the planes across our land were grounded. It was an eerie sight to look up and look up and look up and there be no planes at all. News outlets scrapped all of their programs to have an unending feed, 24 hours a day reporting on and responding to the unfolding national horror. Malls closed. Movie theaters were locked. Sporting events for days were canceled. Churches opened their doors, many of them day and night. Prayer meetings broke out not only in churches but offices and public areas.

I prayed with our staff. We closed the Baptist Building, and all of us went off to other destinations for the day to places where we would be needed more than to be clustered in the building and at our desks. I left to drive to Camp Garaway where a conference was being held. They were joining

for a session there. I told them what was taking place. I shared with them that they probably would need to get on the road and travel home across the state and adjoining states. They were needed by their families and they needed their families. We prayed, and quietly, somberly, somewhat shocked, they made their way out and away.

From there, I traveled from one church to another that was having an immediate and impromptu prayer meeting. The churches were not only open to members, but to hurting, longing, looking people. Everyone was touched by some sense of fear and uncertainty but were also grasped by a new focus – looking to God. One after another, I lived and watched as every one of us, all across our nation and beyond, had all of our plans scrapped and our hearts poured out to God. On into the night, I was at one place after another to the close of day at a church gathering of people on their knees at a prayer meeting that had not been called but everyone came.

I will never forget the following Sunday either. I was scheduled to be at one of our churches to preach on that Sunday, and though I'd never been there before, I got there and it seemed as though the place was covered with cars and a huge crowd was there to attend. There was a huge crowd. The place was filled. Chairs were brought out. They were filled. The thing

I remember most vividly that through the entire service is that men – men of the church, men from the community – stood, lined across the back of the church because there were no more seats. They stood through the entire service. I remember the Lord met with us in that worship time.

Seventeen years later, 9/11/2018, the memories are as vivid if not more so than that fateful day of destruction and death. What and where and how are we going about life now? Well, I can't speak for everyone for sure, but I do know that it seems as though already seventeen years past, we tend to forget. Of course, no one who lived through all of that will forget, but the drama and emotional tension seem to fade. That is both good and bad. None of us can live in the drama and the emotional tension of those days on and on, but it is good to remember. To remember the people, the values that we rediscovered, the relationships, the priorities of life.

In time, things settled back into semi-normalness. It was about ten days later that the first football game would finally be played, and interestingly enough, it was on a Thursday night that Mississippi State University played the University of South Carolina. Who won? Few remember, because we had discovered some new heights about life that transcend a lot of the things that we had thought and maybe now think are so important.

Clearly, they are important, but more clearly is the reality that there are some things, there are some events in life that transcend all of the problems with which we struggle, all of the pettiness of our attitudes and feelings. The emptiness of so many of our activities that were replaced, at least for a little while, with things that reminded us of the greatest values in life – a relationship with God and others that truly make life worth living. We were made by Him and for Him to bless each other and to serve Him. I remember 9/11, and I also remember how important the people around me are and the blessings they are to my life. May I never forget.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

BIBLIOCRYPTER

LZY LZSYN HKOYLZ XKL, QCL NKP LK

JLYWR, WXM LK VSRR, WXM LK

MYJLPKB: S WO HKOY LZWL LZYB OST-

ZL ZWUY RSNY, WXM LZWL LZYB

OSTZL ZWUY SL OKPY WQCXMWXLRB.

DKZX LYX: LYX

Clue: H = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: 2 Peter 3:8

By Charles Marx, 1932–2004, © 2005

75 FOUNDATION FLASHBACKS

Highlights from the history of your Mississippi Baptist Foundation shared in the format of their original publication in *The Baptist Record*. 'Abiding Stewardship' was published on January 2, 1975.

Abiding Stewardship

One's estate at his decease may be the abiding picture of the life lived. The way the estate is left could easily determine the strength or weakness of a person's Christian witness as long as time shall stand. Our possessions survive us here, either for or against God; and their direction continues to answer to our name.

Heaven's reward at the end of time will reveal the amount of good or evil our possessions have done. A Christian does well to "leave it like we have lived it." Money in itself is neither sacred nor secular, but it takes on the character

of the one who possesses it. Material possessions are sought in life and reckoned with after death. The great test of possessions in eternity will not be how much but how faithful, not merely with the tithe, but with all God has entrusted to us.

The Bible emphasizes parental responsibility in providing for children. ... If we destroy their initiative, we may destroy them. Our children need to know that an inheritance is a sacred trust to contribute strength to Kingdom building and not to finance riotous living.



>>> Visit mbbfoundation.org, call 601-292-3210, or e-mail foundation@mbcb.org to learn how your church can encourage legacy giving through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

College News



The highlight of **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY'S** general assembly before the start of the new academic year was the awarding of a 45-year service pin to Earline Herrin, administrative assistant in the School of Education. Herrin received a standing ovation from her colleagues gathered at Thomas Fine Arts Center. She is shown with WCU President Tommy King, right, and WCU Provost Scott Hummel. Forty-five faculty and staff members were honored during the ceremony for five years of service or more.



BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
Women Basketball's Lauren Ashley Collins has been chosen to serve as president of the Southern States Athletic Conference Student Leadership Council for 2018-19. Commissioner Mike Hall announced this week. Collins, a native of Cleveland, is known on the BMC campus as "LA." This will be her third term as a member of the council, the longest of any student-athlete in the conference in its history.

In other College News:

► U.S. News and World Report has ranked **Mississippi College** as No. 16 as a Best Value School among the South's top regional universities. The survey weighs costs, while measuring academic quality. MC lists tuition and fees as \$18,026 for the 2018-19 academic year. Mississippi College is also ranked No. 22 among the South's leading regional universities as an institution that addresses the needs of military veterans. MC also is rated 22nd best in terms of its undergraduate teaching in the region.

Staff Changes



FIRST CHURCH, RICHTON, has called Joshua Dunn as pastor. He is shown with members of the search committee.



CALVARY CHURCH, WEST POINT, has called Joe Wiggins as pastor. Wiggins is a native of Columbia and has served churches in Louisiana and Mississippi. He is an alumnus of the University of Southern Mississippi, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Pictured with Wiggins is his wife, Angela, and their daughter, Jessica.

China escalates persecution of Christian churches, believers

BEIJING (BP and local reports) — China is raiding and shuttering churches, assaulting worshipers, destroying crosses, and burning Bibles in escalating persecution of Christians under a Communist constitution that claims to grant religious freedom.

Reuters news service reported police closed the largest house church in Beijing on Sept. 9, the multisite Zion Church. The Chaoyang District Civil Affairs Bureau declared the church illegal because it wasn't registered with the government-controlled Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM).

A week earlier in Henan Province federal and local government officials of various ranks stormed several churches and assaulted worshipers, it was widely reported. Henan police raided a church and burned crosses, Bibles, and furniture on Sept. 5, a Henan pastor told the Associated Press under condition of anonymity.

Under new restrictions on religion in place since February, Henan officials have closed churches, forced congregations to display the Chinese flag along with pictures of Maoism founder Mao Zedong and current president Xi Jinping, and have sometimes taken Christians into custody, China religious freedom watchdog China Aid said.

China Aid is among groups denouncing the acts and calling on the international community to help China's persecuted Christians, who comprise five percent of the nation's 1.38 billion people.

"The massive clampdown against thousands of churches in Henan and the forced closure and total shutdown of the largest house church in Beijing, Zion Church, [represent] a significant escalation on President Xi's crackdown down against religious freedom in China," China Aid founder and president Bob Fu said Sept. 10 from the U.S.

"Now that the Chinese Communist Party has started to burn Bibles and coerce millions of believers in the Christian faith and other religious minorities to even sign a written pledge to renounce their basic religious beliefs, the international community should be alarmed and outraged at this blatant violation of freedom of religion and belief, and demand the Chinese regime stop and remedy this dangerous course."

Religious persecution has escalated under the presidency of Xi that began in 2013. The government dropped term limits in March, so the XI presidency with its high levels of persecution could last a long time.



SHUT DOWN — Police assault worshipers while raiding an unidentified Chinese house church, as religious persecution is rising to disturbing levels in the Communist country under President Xi Jinping. (Screen grab courtesy of China Aid)

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) condemned the persecution of Chinese Christians and other religious minorities there, including Uighur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, and Falun Gong practitioners.

"USCIRF is highly concerned by reports of Chinese authorities escalating religious freedom violations," USCIRF said Sept. 11. "These collective actions... signal an alarming escalation in persecution of citizens in China under Xi Jinping."

"USCIRF condemns the Chinese government's ongoing brutal and systematic targeting of religious communities for their beliefs."

Open Doors USA, which advocates for Christians in the most oppressive and restrictive countries, called China's actions "archaic."

"China wants to be seen as a world superpower, and yet, in their attempt to unite their people around the atheist Communist party, they've overreached and taken a huge step backward," Open Doors USA president and CEO David Curry said in a Sept. 12 news release.

"My prayer is that leaders from around the world will immediately and decisively confront China's actions before more damage is done. We cannot stand by as they wipe personal religious freedom from their country."

Open Doors ranks China as 43rd internationally where it is most difficult for Christians to live. More than half of the population claims no religious affiliation, according to the CIA's World Factbook.

In Beijing, Zion Church pastor Jin Mingri has vowed to continue leading his con-

gregation by holding services outdoors. Jin voiced perseverance two weeks ago when the government told the congregation it would have to relocate, with officials hoping the forced relocation would automatically close the church, China Aid alleged.

On the afternoon of Sept. 15, about 60 government officials came with buses, police cars, and fire trucks. They sealed the church shut and confiscated Jin's personal assets and church items they deemed propaganda.

"Churches will continue to develop," Jin told AP by phone. "Blocking the sites will only intensify conflicts."

Both unregistered house churches such as Zion and registered state churches are facing greater persecution, Jan Vermeer, Open Doors field director for Asia, said in today's press release. Confinement in labor camps is a possibility for the most vulnerable worshippers.

"Persecution varies from place to place," Vermeer said. "The Han Chinese [an east Asian ethnic group native to China] can meet in registered state churches or unregistered churches, but Christians who converted from the Muslim faith must meet in secret."

"We're still investigating the impact these new measures are having on local populations, but Han Chinese will be fined or their churches closed and other smaller, more vulnerable groups may end up in labor camps," Vermeer said.

In July, 34 Beijing house churches released a joint statement on the government's harassment and failure to enforce Article 36 of the Chinese Constitution, which reads "The State protects normal religious activities," China Aid said.

Just for the Record



The youth and kids from **GRACE UNITED CHURCH, DECATUR**, participated in Blessings of the Backpacks on August 5 before school started. Jamie Leach, pastor.



The Sunday night Bible group from **LIBERTY CHURCH, COLLINSVILLE**, enjoyed an informative tour at The Promise Land Journey.



LIBERTY CHURCH, KEMPER COUNTY, held a deacon ordination Aug. 26. Shown are Gary Weaver, his wife Aby, and pastor Dennis Robinson.



MT. HOREB CHURCH, COLLINS, held a deacon ordination Sept. 9. Shown are Larry Bullock and pastor Jonathan Bryant.



The ladies of **LUCIEN CHURCH AND NEW SALEM CHURCH, FRANKLIN COUNTY**, held their monthly meeting at Lucien, with Betty Smith bringing attention to the cross of Christ in her devotional. The group meets the 3rd Sunday at 3:30 p.m. with a covered dish meal alternating between the two churches.



Marilyn Tinnin spoke recently to women from Carroll County and the surrounding area at the **CARROLLTON CHURCH, CARROLLTON'S**, 16th Women's Conference on the topic of The Undivided Heart from Psalm 86:11.



ARBOR GROVE CHURCH, HOUSTON, held a ministerial ordination for Will Livingston July 29. Shown are Ronald Meeks, Livingston, Laura Claire Livingston, and Jason Brassfield.



FREDONIA CHURCH, NEW ALBANY, held a mission organization recognition service Aug. 29. The Mission Friends, GA's, and RA's received certificates, medals, and badges during the service.

4 Questions for Church Bus Buyers:

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Revivals & Homecomings

► **Tillatoba Church, Tillatoba:** 133rd homecoming, Sept. 23; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Danny Spratin, speaker; Steve and Linda McGregor, music.

► **Coila Church, Coila:** Revival, Sept. 23 - 26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Lanny Haley, speaker; Terry Corley, pastor.

► **Indian Springs Church, Laurel:** Revival, Sept. 23 - 26; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. nightly; Don Boone, speaker; Caleb Hernandez, music; Richard C. Clark, pastor.

► **Cherry Creek Church, Ecrus:** 175th anniversary, Sept. 23; service, 11 a.m. followed by dinner on the grounds; Jim Futral, speaker; Jim Ray, pastor.

► **Hope Church, Neshoba Association:** Homecoming, Sept. 23; services, 10:30 a.m. followed by potluck lunch; Brian Weir, speaker; Dennis Duvall, pastor.

► **First Church, Belzon:** Revival, Sept. 23 - 26; Sun. - Tues., 7 p.m.; Wed., 6:15 a.m.; Jerry Mixon, speaker; John Gates, music.

► **Southside Church, Vicksburg:** Revival, Sept. 23 - 28; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Mike Routon, speaker.

► **Rocky Point Church, Carthage:** Homecoming, Sept. 23; worship, 10:45 a.m. followed by covered dish lunch; Nate Carroll, pastor and speaker.

► **Beulah Church, Lexington:** Homecoming, Sept. 23; service, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon singing; Tony Deweese, speaker.

► **Old Oak Grove Church, Myrtle:** 145th anniversary/homecoming, Sept. 23; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; David Poe, speaker; Sill Standing Quartet, music; Bobby Butler, pastor.

Just for the Record



BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH, DECATUR, presented Sunday School Perfect Attendance Pins to the following for Church Year 2017-2018. Pictured left to right are Alan Kelly-one year; Nathan Kelly-7 years; Mary Ann Kelly-7 years; Billy E. Williams-8 years; Elton Bryan-25 years; Barbara J. Harrison-36 years; Laverne Chaney-41 years; Will Motley-41 years; Neal Motley-49 years.



FIRST CHURCH, BUCKATUNNA, held a ground breaking ceremony on Sept. 9 for their Family Life Center. Pictured are the building committee members.



The GA's of **ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, collected and delivered supplies to Dickerson Place and will receive a badge for their mission project. Shown are the participants, Stephen Slump, pastor.



PHILADELPHIA CHURCH, ETTA, held a deacon ordination. Shown are chairman Mickey Clayton, pastor Bobby Irvin, Roy Tate, Joe McNeer, Luke Wait, and Cris Wait.

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Ike Watkins, Motorcoach Operator of nearly 20 years.

In other Church News:

► The Institute for Faith and the Public Square is hosting a conference on "Immigration: Balancing Compassion, Security, and Jobs" September 25, 7-10 pm in Leavell Chapel on the campus of **New Orleans Baptist Seminary**. The speakers are: Tony Suarez, National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference; Noel Castellanos, Executive Director of the Christian Community Development Association; G. Benjamin Johnson, President of New Orleans Chamber of Commerce; and Elaine Kimbrell, Managing Partner of Ware Immigration. To register to attend in person (and qualify for value book give-aways) or to watch free online, go to www.faith-publicsquare.org.

Baptists to minister to seniors at State Fair

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

"I've been coming to the State Fair all my life and I've been a Baptist all my life, too," says Don Lum, director of evangelism at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). "Now here we are with an opportunity as Mississippi Baptists to co-sponsor Senior Adult Day at the 2018 State Fair.

"MBCB is joining with Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, Inc. — two names that have served Mississippi well for a long, long time. We have the opportunity to do something very special, and that is ministering to senior adults."

The senior adult emphasis at the State Fair has been going on

for some time, but this is the first year Mississippi Baptists have been invited to be a co-sponsor, Lum explains.

Senior Adult Day will be offered at the State Fair on October 10, from 9 a.m. until noon. The event is free and will be held on the ground floor of the Mississippi Coliseum, which is located in the very middle of the Fair.

"Some people think senior adults can't walk around all over the Fair," Lum says. "It's not that at all. Everything happens in the Coliseum, on the ground floor. People can park there at the Coliseum, or be dropped off right at the door."

"Those in wheelchairs will have full access. There will be helps and booths, with vendors showing items specifically for senior adults. Even flu shots will also be available."

Christian comedian Dennis Swanberg will be a featured speaker. "It will be a fun, exciting day," Lum predicts.

"If any of the people or groups want to walk around the rest of the fair afterwards, they'll be able to do that," Lum says. "Admission is free."

Why are Mississippi Baptist sponsoring this event at the State Fair?

"It's a great privilege for us to be able to connect with so many of our senior adults," Lum states. "We'll be looking for opportunities to share Christ with them, and to remind them of God's goodness in their lives."

Visitors are encouraged to enter the fairgrounds at the High Street entrance and go directly to the Coliseum.



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HEALTH SYSTEMS

Voters downplay candidates' faith but shy away from 'nones'

NASHVILLE (BP) — Relatively few Americans say a political candidate's religious beliefs are an important factor when they decide how to vote, yet Americans hardly ever elect a religiously unaffiliated member of Congress.

That's according to a poll released Sept. 11 by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

"Many middle of the road Americans are generally most comfortable with people who are religious, but not too religious," said Hunter Baker, associate professor of political science at Baptist-affiliated Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

"They like the idea that a leader considers [himself] somehow accountable to God, but they don't want that relationship front and center. Further, I think they intuitively end up casting atheists as just another category of zealous evangelists."

According to the AP-NORC poll, 25% of Americans say it's very or extremely important a candidate has strong religious beliefs. Just 19% say it's very or extremely important a candidate shares their religious beliefs.

That a candidate has some faith is most important to white, born-again Christians and non-white Protestants. Fifty-one percent of the former and 47% of the latter consider it very or extremely important — higher percentages than among Catholics (25%), other white Protestants (18%), and Americans with no religious affiliation (six percent).

Thirty-five percent of white born-again Christians say it's very or extremely important a candidate shares their particular religious beliefs, as do 39% of non-white Protestants, 17%



Photo by Barbara Kalbfleisch/Shutterstock.com

of Catholics, 11% of other white Protestants, and six percent of those with no affiliation.

Despite the overall low percentage of those who view a candidate's religious beliefs as crucial, just one current member of Congress — Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, (D-Ariz.) — describes herself as having no religious affiliation, a category dubbed the "nones."

Ten other members of Congress out of more than 530 total have declined to state their religious affiliation, according to the Pew Research Center.

Some 98% of Congress members report affiliation with a specific religion, including 90.7% which claim the Christian faith, Pew reported.

The percentage of Christians in Congress is about the same as it was in the early 1960s, according to Pew, despite a decline in America's overall percentage of Christians and an increase in the percentage of religiously unaffiliated individuals.

A political group called the Atheist Candidates Project is seeking "equitable representation"

for non-believers in government," according to its website. "Where other formerly underrepresented groups achieved equity in representation, atheists have not," the website declares.

Baker said many politicians seem to use religion as a "kind of fig leaf or perhaps as a box that has to be publicly checked off. It raises suspicion if no affiliation is claimed and so they claim an affiliation."

"If we were to ask how many are serious members of a vital community of faith, that high number would drop dramatically."

In a separate section of the AP-NORC poll, Americans said religion should influence public policy on a range of issues.

Poverty topped the list, with 57% stating religion should have a lot or some influence on poverty policy. Climate change policy came in last among issues polled, with 32% saying it should be influenced a lot or some by religion.

Forty-five percent said religion should influence abortion policy, and 34% said it should in-

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IMMANUEL BAPTIST OF VICKSBURG IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH MINISTER. Please email resume to mbf12@yahoo.com or mail to IBC Personnel Committee at 6949 Hwy 61 South, Vicksburg, MS 39180.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF RUNNELSTOWN IS SEEKING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. All interested candidates please email your resume to pastor@fbcrunnelstown.com or mail to 9211 Highway 42, Petal, MS 39465.

FIRST BAPTIST OF WINONA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME STUDENTS MINISTER. All interested candidates please email your resume to cboone@fbcwinnona.org or mail to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 408, Winona, MS 38967, ATTN: Daniel Hill.

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NEW PROSPECT BAPTIST CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR. Please email resume to rourts@newprospect.net.

THE PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR CLARKSON BAPTIST CHURCH IS ACCEPTING RESUME'S FOR A FULL-TIME PASTOR. God will provide us His choice. If you feel God is leading you to CBC, please submit a resume prior to October 1 to Clarkson Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 5400 Old Hwy 50, Mathiston, MS 39752.

UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please mail resumes to Unity Baptist Church, P.O. Box 156, Moselle, MS 39459. Or you may email them to ubc.resumes@yahoo.com. Either should be designated as Attention: Pastor Search Committee.

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WCU approaching complete recovery from 2017 tornado

HATTIESBURG, Ms. (Special) — William Carey University in Hattiesburg hoisted the clock tower at the new Tatum Court on campus on Aug. 30. The school, affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention, was nearly flattened by an EF3 tornado that swept through the Hattiesburg area in January 2017. Six buildings

were destroyed including Tatum Court, the oldest building on campus when the tornado struck. Of the remaining buildings on campus, all but one was heavily damaged by the tornado and have been either repaired or replaced. More than a year and a half after the twister, the new Tatum Court is the final construction proj-

ect and marks the full recovery of the 126-year-old institution of higher learning. The new Tatum Court, a three-story, 30,000-square-foot administrative complex, is scheduled to open in December.

For more articles on the WCU tornado recovery effort, visit wmcarey.edu/news and scroll down to Recent News.

FLORENCE

cont. from p. 1

Chainsaw teams are also being put together for debris removal — another tremendous need, McGivney added. "Mudout and chainsaw are going to be necessary for an extended period of time."

McGivney said he has been advised Gulf Coast Association in Gulfport has scheduled training for volunteers from that area for immediate mobilization to the hurricane area, and Jackson Association in Pascagoula will soon have a team on its way.

McGivney said while qualified volunteers are going to be needed for many months to come, funding the response is also a primary concern.

"In-kind gifts of clothing and household items are not as important right now as cash gifts that can be used for food, disinfectants and other cleaning supplies, and emergency items when and where the need arises," he said.

At the present time, McGivney pointed out, there is

How can I help?

To provide a tax-deductible cash donation, make check payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and designate "Disaster Relief" on the memo line. Mail check to MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/florencehelp.

To inquire about becoming a Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteer, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at the above address, or via e-mail at davil@mmbcb.org.

no logistics system available to Mississippi Baptists to collect and transport in-kind gifts. "For those reasons, we currently cannot accept in-kind gifts."

To provide a tax-deductible cash donation, make check payable to Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and designate "Disaster Relief" on the memo line. Mail check to MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/florencehelp.

To inquire about becoming a Mississippi Baptist disaster relief volunteer, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at the above address, or via e-mail at davil@mmbcb.org.

Baptist Press is reporting dozens of church buildings suffered damage along a 150-mile stretch of coastline from Southport, N.C., to New Bern, N.C., with additional church damage as far inland as Fayetteville, N.C., some 140 miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

In addition, Baptist Press listed serious structural damage to five buildings at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell, a camp facility owned by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

The Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina reported storm damage at two of their campuses, including floodwater at their facility in Kinston, N.C., that appeared higher than 2016 flooding which caused \$1.5 million in damage following Hurricane Matthew, according to Baptist Press.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by .11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mmbcb.org.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

AUGUST

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SEPTEMBER 1-15

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SEPTEMBER 1-15

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Ms. Marie S. Graham
Mrs. Janet Bratschi
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion

Christmas Parties & Projects

If your church group, civic club, family, etc., is interested in hosting a Christmas party or sponsoring Christmas gifts for children and youth at The Baptist Children's Village, please start planning now and contact the campus closest to you for more information and to make arrangements. If you would be interested in purchasing gift cards or other gifts for our non-residential families, please contact our headquarters.

Contact details are listed below and may also be found at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com/locations.

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BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Tom Prather at tprather@bcvms.com or 601-952-2422.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

True Heirs • Galatians 3:19-4:7

My friends Rickey and Kathy desperately wanted a baby but could not conceive. God miraculously made a way for them to adopt a precious baby girl they named Elizabeth. From the moment she was born, Elizabeth was their child and their heir. When we become believers in Jesus Christ, we are no longer slaves to sin. Instead, we are adopted into God's family. In Galatians 3 and 4, Paul wrote about the law as an old guardian, God's family as a new community, and our heirship as a new position.

Galatians 3:19-28. An Old Guardian. Paul began by asking the question, "Why the Law then? (v. 19). The answer to his question was, "...because of transgressions..." Parabasis is the Greek word for transgressions meaning "a deliberate going over the line; willful disregard of God's law." The Children of Israel were deliberately and willfully disobeying God. Paul explained that the law served as a strict tutor or nanny, pointing out their waywardness and need for a better way to gain a relationship with God. According to one commentary, "The law had two functions. On the positive side, it reveals the nature and will of God and shows people how to live. One the negative side, it points out people's sins and shows them that it is impossible to

please God by trying to obey all his laws completely." In other words, the law reveals our inability to save ourselves.

Paul continued in verse 19, "...having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator...." Paul may have been referring to the Jews' belief that angels gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. In Acts 7, Luke shared Stephen's defense of the gospel before the high priest and council. Stephen said, "This is the one (Moses) who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was

with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you" (v. 38). He also said, "You received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it" (vv. 53).

Paul was indicating the superiority of salvation through "the seed" (Jesus) over the law. Paul wrote that "we were kept in custody under the law" until faith came and "the Law became our tutor to lead



Explore the Bible

with Liz McGraw

have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (vv. 25-28). All become part of God's family in the same way regardless of race, occupation, position, or gender. Faith in Jesus unifies all believers as members of God's family.

Galatians 3:29, 4:1-7. A New Position. Pointing to the maturation of a child, Paul explained that his readers were now in the position of being heirs through faith in Jesus. In accordance with God's plan, Jesus came to redeem humanity through His death, burial, and resurrection. Faith in Jesus frees believers from the law and puts them in a position to receive the blessing of God as an heir. Paul wrote, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (v. 29). The promises to Abraham in Genesis predated the law and thus took precedence. The Greek word for heir is *kleronomos*, meaning "someone who inherits." We become joint heirs with Jesus when we are spiritually adopted.

Do we really understand our new position? Regardless of what we have done, regardless of who we were, regardless of race, occupation, position or gender, from the moment we are born again, we are adopted into the family of God and become His heirs with all of the blessings promised to Abraham attached.

McGraw is a NAMB-endorsed chaplain at Louisiana State Penitentiary and member of Woodville Church, Woodville.

Intentional Love • Luke 10:25-37

The story of the good Samaritan teaches that love is far more than a feeling. Genuine love includes action. In early March, I was scheduled to write the Sunday School lessons for the Baptist Record for three months. I had submitted one when I had to have emergency heart surgery. I was out of commission for three months, but never missed a single Baptist Record article. I missed none, because Tony Martin, Assistant Editor, heard about my situation and wrote the remaining twelve articles for me. For Tony, this was far more than just his job. He helped me, his friend, in my time of need. Tony saw my need and acted. Thank you, Tony.

In Luke 10, Jesus told about a man in need. Luke 10:30 reads, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead," (KJV). The man truly was in need. If no one acted, he surely would die. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was treacherous, dropping over 800 feet in elevation in fifteen miles, with many places for thieves to hide and attack. Just north of there was the valley of the shadow of death, an actual dangerous place in the wilderness. This man was in trouble.

The story continues: "And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise, a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side, Luke 10:31-32, (KJV). Two supposedly holy men passed by one at a time. Each decided not to act. According to Old Testament law, if he were dead, they would each be ceremonially unclean until sundown, so neither wished to be inconvenienced by touching a dead body, possibly. While the beaten and robbed man was going to Jericho, these two men could have been going the opposite direction to Jerusalem to the Temple. How inconvenient!

Jesus told this story to a lawyer, one was an expert in the Old Testament law, who wished to justify himself. He asked in Luke 10: 29, "Who is my neighbor?" The legalistic Jews argued much about this question. They came up with an

arbitrary distance, so that anyone past that boundary was not their responsibility. Jesus' answer to him blew up their arbitrary boundary with a boundary of genuine love in action.

Clearly the Levite and Priest lived nowhere near the beaten and robbed man. So they were absolved, in their minds, from obeying the text that demanded, "love your neighbor as yourself." Far too many of us ask what the least is we can do to help someone else. Peter asked how many times he had to forgive one who wronged him. He wanted limits, but Jesus took away those limits. His answer was for more than imagined by Peter, (Matthew 18:22, KJV).

Jesus surprised the lawyer with the rest of the story. Luke 10:33-35 reads, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds,

pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee,'" (KJV).

The Jews despised the Samaritans, considering them half-breeds who had betrayed Israel. Yet it was a Samaritan who helped the man in trouble. The lawyer was so surprised that Jesus asked him which of the three, the Levite, the Priest, or the Samaritan, was a neighbor to the man beaten, he would not even say the word Samaritan. He answered, "The one who showed mercy to him," (Luke 10:37 KJV). The Levite and the Priest knew the word of God, but it did not change their actions. The Samaritan sacrificed for the man in trouble, though He did not know him. True neighborly love, from the actions of the good Samaritan, include seeing the need, feeling compassion for the person in need, and action to help. Luke 10:33 reads, "he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him," (KJV). Who is your neighbor?

Henson is a member of Meadow Grove Church, Brandon.

NURSE

cont. from p. 1

care minister at First Church, Jackson, served in Chile for 20 years where her work included

serving as a parish nursing volunteer, coordinator of volunteer medical teams, and administrative assistant.

The couple also served with the mission board's American Peoples Diaspora in Europe and

Canada for five years before returning to the U.S. in 2015.

Lori Spikes holds a bachelor of science in nursing degree from Samford University in suburban Birmingham, Al.

The Spikes reside in Clin-

ton and are members of First Church, Jackson.

Baptist Nursing Fellowship, a ministry partner with national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in Birmingham, was established in 1983. The Missis-

sippi BNF chapter is associated with the state's WMU. The organization provides continuing education, missions opportunities, and fellowship for Baptist nurses serving in the U.S. and on mission fields around the world.

Medical marijuana hits rough patch in Okla.

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP and local reports) — Since Oklahoma voters approved what may be America's most permissive medical marijuana law in a June 26 referendum, the state has experienced pushback by medical experts and other citizens concerned about potential misuse of the drug since the ballot measure did not provide detailed instructions on who may prescribe or use marijuana.

That task has since fallen to state legislators and licensing boards. To marijuana supporters' chagrin, medical experts have advocated regulations that would limit the potency of medical marijuana and ban sales of smokable cannabis.

The state Board of Health enacted both regulations July 10 but rescinded them less than a month later, leaving the state legislature to decide whether to reenact such policies.

State Question 788 on medical marijuana, which passed with nearly 57% approval, was a "deceptive ploy" to pave the way for widespread use of recreational marijuana, said Blake Gideon, an opponent of the measure and pastor of First Church, Edmond.

As if to prove the pastor's point, a petition was filed in August to overturn the law. Oklahoma's law permits individuals age 18 and older to obtain a medical marijuana license with the approval of an Oklahoma board-certified



Gideon told Baptist Press his prayer is for clear guidelines on what type of doctors can prescribe medical marijuana; strict guidelines on the types of illnesses that qualify; a ban on smokable marijuana; and a reversal of S.Q. 788's provision allowing two-year prescriptions for marijuana.

Oklahoma's law permits individuals age 18 and older to obtain a medical marijuana license with the approval of an Oklahoma board-certified

physician. Minors are permitted to obtain medical marijuana with the signatures of two physicians and the applicant's parent or legal guardian.

The law took effect July 26, but could take nine months or longer for the measure to be implemented, according to media reports.

In August, multiple panels of medical experts told an Oklahoma legislative working group that tight regulation of medical marijuana is needed,

including a ban of smokable cannabis and a cap on the permissible amount of marijuana's psychoactive ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinols (THC).

When legislators expressed concerns about overturning voters' desire for largely unrestricted medical marijuana access, Oklahoma State University psychiatrist Jason Beaman replied, "The way that the people vote doesn't change the danger in the

THC content. So if [voters] want high levels, that's certainly their vote but it doesn't change the science of what the high levels do," the Tulsa World reported.

Bob McCaffree, a faculty member at the Oklahoma Tobacco Research Center in Oklahoma City, told legislators, "I don't envy you... All I can say is as a scientist, we know what the ill effects are of smoking any substance," the World reported.

The Oklahoman newspaper in Oklahoma City reported Sept. 9 that just 48 doctors have joined a state registry of physicians open to recommending medical marijuana to patients. In contrast, nearly 3,000 patients applied to use medical cannabis during the first five days the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority accepted applications.

Mike Scifres, a retired Oklahoma pharmacist who serves on the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said some patients with severe pain may need cannabis-based medication, but it long has been available in prescription pills approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Smokable cannabis is not likely to provide medical benefits unavailable through regulated pills, he pointed out.

Editor's note: Illustration courtesy of Baptist Press.

Another scientific discovery backs human race timeline

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (BP and local reports) — A landmark study published last month appears to challenge evolutionists' assumptions about human ancestry.

DNA analysis of an ancient bone fragment, published last month in the journal Nature, concluded the fragment belonged to a 13-year-old girl with a Neanderthal mother and Denisovan father.

Evolutionists generally consider Neanderthals and Denisovans to be two separate groups of ancient human relatives that share a common ancestor with modern humans, but do not come from the same species and rarely if ever mated. The fossil reportedly represents the first concrete proof that Neanderthals and Denisovans mated.

Researchers found the mother's DNA more closely matched the DNA of Neanderthals who lived in Western Europe than to those who lived near the Denisova Cave in Siberia where archaeologists found the fossil, suggesting Neanderthals migrated between Western and Eastern Eurasia long before they became extinct.

DNA analysis also revealed the girl's Denisovan father had at least one Neanderthal ancestor in his family tree, further evidence that Denisovans and Neanderthals mated more than researchers previously believed.

Modern humans also apparently mated with both Neanderthals and Denisovans. Today, Neanderthal DNA reportedly accounts for about two percent of the DNA from most Europeans and Asians, and four to six percent of the genomes of modern Melanesian groups in the Pacific Islands come from Denisovans.

The discovery that these two groups mated with each other astonished scientists who commonly believe that separate species cannot mate and produce offspring.

"That sort of qualitatively transforms and changes our

understanding of the world," David Reich, a Harvard geneticist, told National Geographic.

The analysis came as no surprise to many creationists, however, who have always considered Neanderthals and Denisovans part of the same species as modern humans. In a chapter of the 2016 book, *Searching for Adam: Genesis and the Truth about Man's Origin*, by Terry Mortenson, young earth creationist and anthropologist Marvin Lubenow concluded DNA, fossil, and anthropology records all support the "full humanity of the Neanderthals, our worthy ancestors."

Ann Gauger, an intelligent design expert with Discovery Institute, agreed: "Evolutionary biologists like to split the human lineage into as many parts as they can. Hence they call these different species, when it is more fitting to call them different sub-groups."

The Bible's Genesis testimony indicates God created one human species, and scientific



Photo by mmatee/Shutterstock.com

discoveries like this one continue to affirm that truth.

"From a Biblical perspective, [Neanderthals] were a post-Flood, Ice Age people specializing in hunting the large, grazing animals that were abundant toward the end of the Ice Age and afterward," Lubenow wrote.

The fossil evidence reportedly does not point to an evolution of one human species

into another human species, but instead a variety of characteristics among various human populations.

Editor's note: Article is courtesy of WORLD Digital, a division of WORLD Magazine (www.worldmag.com) based in Asheville, N.C. Used by permission. Edited for style and inclusion of clarifying information.